US006311535B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Mehta

(10) **Patent No.: US 6,311,535 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Nov. 6, 2001**

(54) **HIGH VOLTAGE BUSHING EMBOSSING PUNCH TOOL AND METHOD**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/473,875**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 28, 1999**

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **B21D 28/26**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **72/334**; 72/327
(58) **Field of Search** 72/334, 333, 327, 72/326, 294, 379.2; 29/896.6

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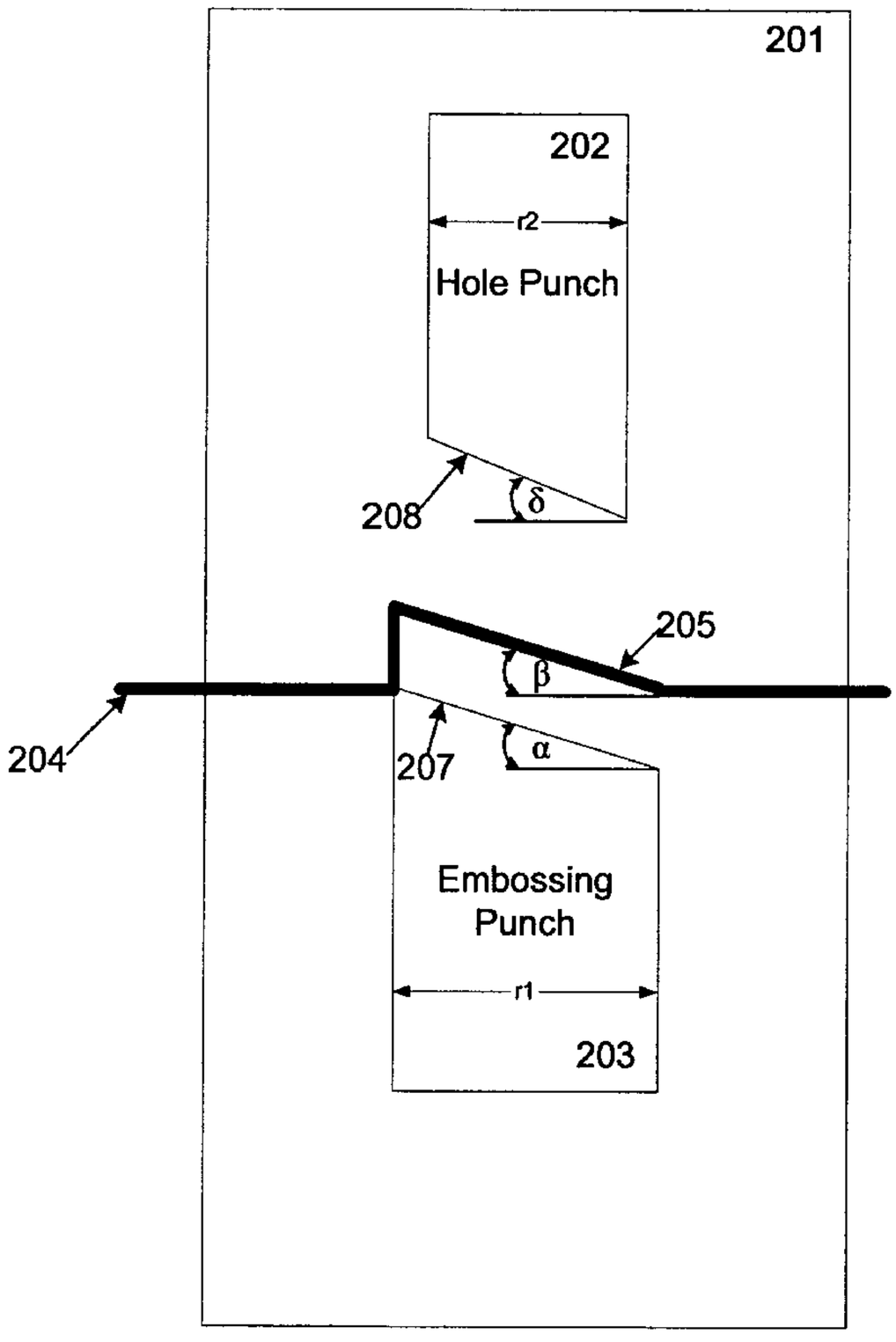
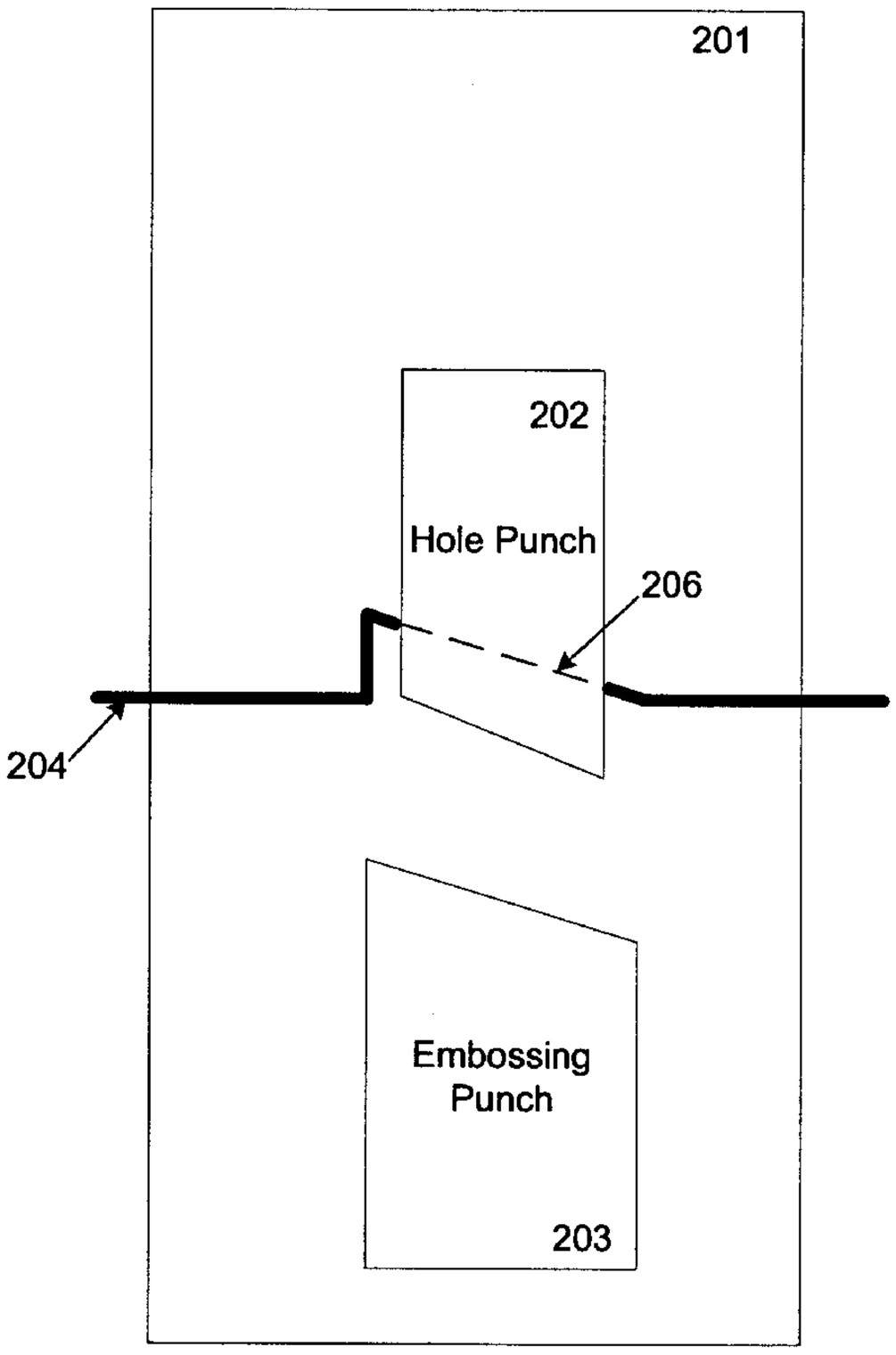
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a method and system that creates a hole with an embossed base in a planar sheet. The system comprises an embossing punch that forms a raised area in the planar sheet, a hole punch coupled to the embossing punch that forms a hole in the planar sheet, and a surface for holding the planar sheet. The surface has an aperture that permits the hole punch and the embossing punch to pass through the surface and contact the planar sheet.

14 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets





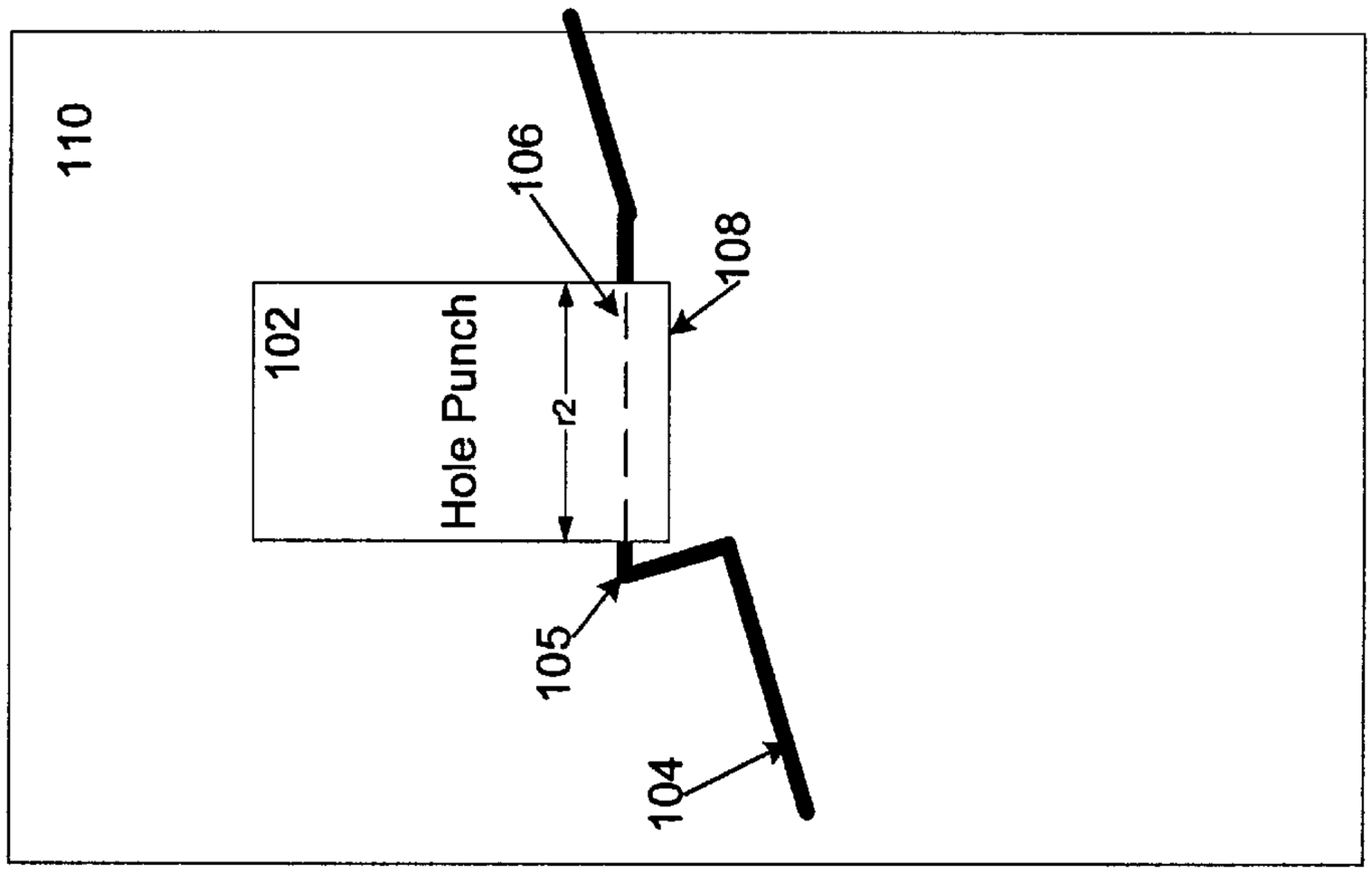


FIGURE 1B
(PRIOR ART)

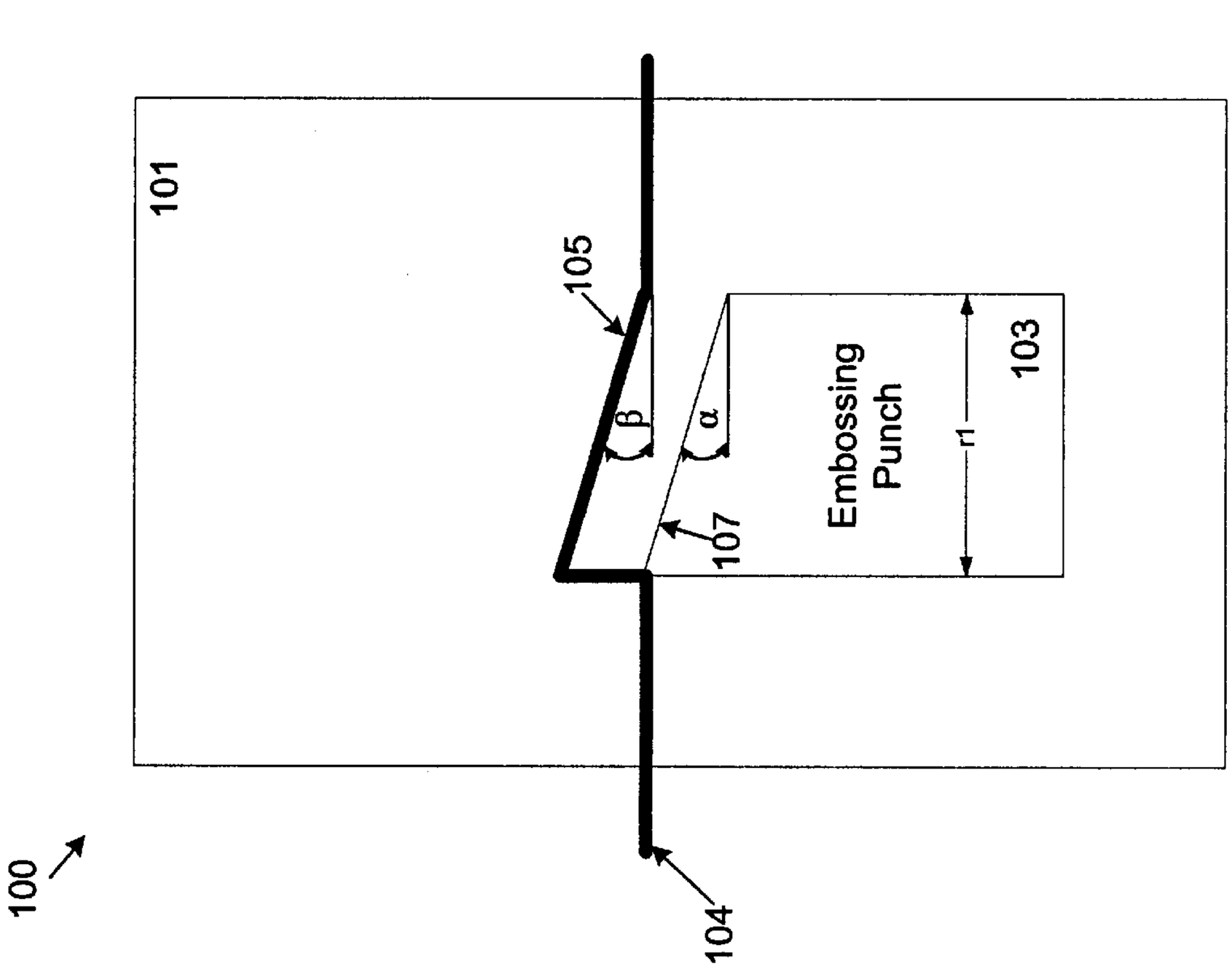


FIGURE 1A
(PRIOR ART)

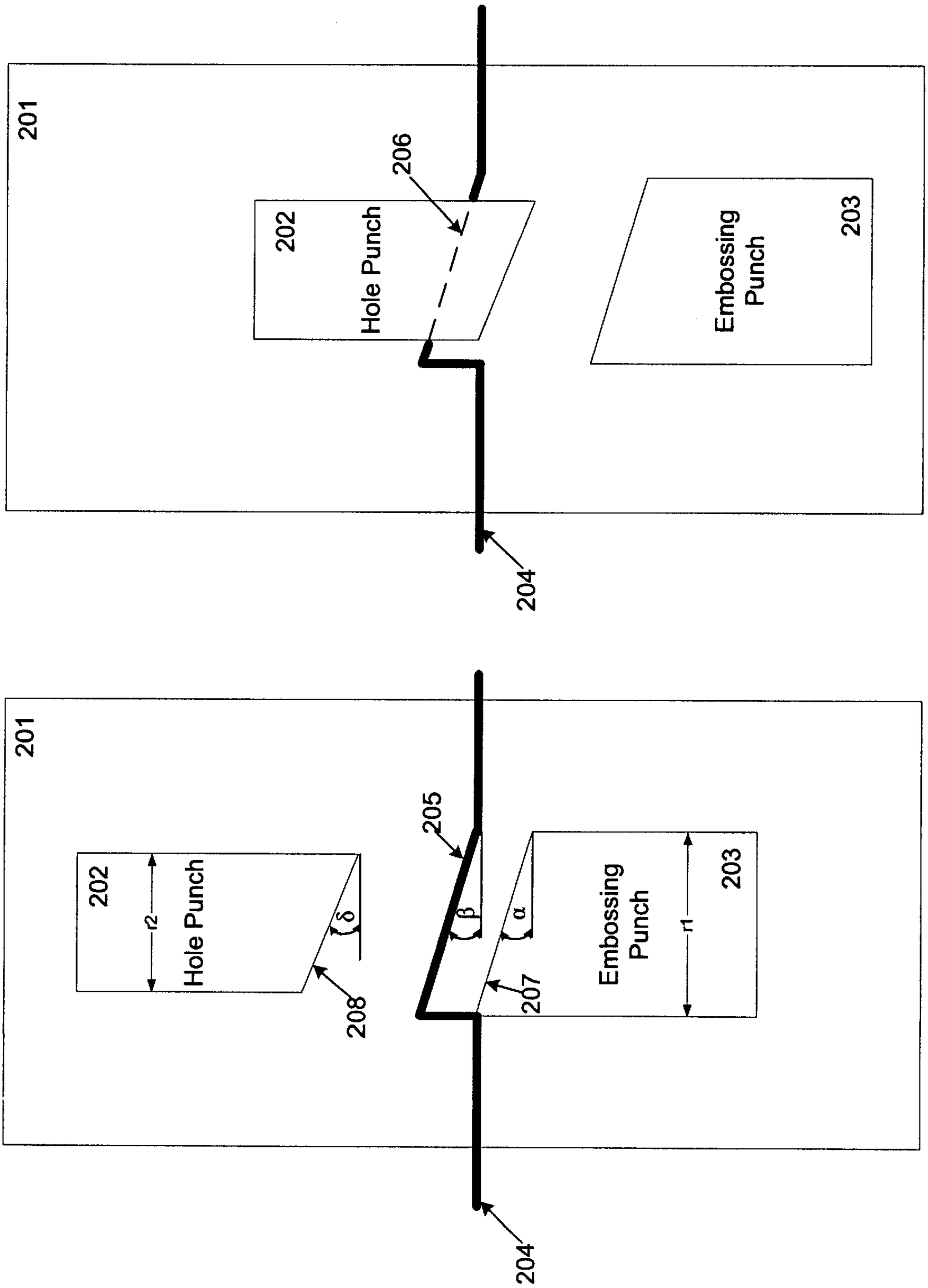


FIGURE 2B

FIGURE 2A

HIGH VOLTAGE BUSHING EMBOSSING PUNCH TOOL AND METHOD

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a system for automatically embossing and creating a hole in a workpiece. More specifically, the present invention relates to making a hole with an embossed base for accommodating high voltage bushings in transformer tank enclosures.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Due to the very nature of their operation, power system transformers must manage high voltage levels. For example, distribution transformers commonly reduce transmission voltages from distribution levels of 2.3 kV to 69 kV down to final utilization levels of 120V to 480V. In so doing, power system transformers use high voltage bushings to input the distribution level voltages. The high voltage bushings are attached to the primary windings of the transformer. Because the transformer windings reside in oil-filled tanks, the high voltage bushings commonly are affixed to the outside of oil-filled transformer tanks. The high voltage bushings are then connected to the primary windings through holes in the transformer tank. In the case of pad-mounted transformers, the oil-filled tanks and high voltage bushings are further surrounded by an outside enclosure for safety reasons.

In order to protect the transformer and protect the public from electrical hazards, the high voltage bushings are sized in accordance with strict industry standards. Accordingly, the corresponding holes made in the transformer tanks must be within strict tolerances. If the holes are out of tolerance, the standard sized high voltage bushings may be too large for the holes, rendering the tank unusable. Alternatively, the holes may be too large for the high voltage bushings, permitting water damage to the transformer and safety concerns for the public.

Manufacturing a pad-mounted transformer tank begins by making holes for the high voltage bushings in flat sheets of metal. The flat metal sheets eventually are formed into rectangular enclosures. The process of making holes for the high voltage bushings in pad-mounted distribution transformers is further complicated by an industry-accepted standard that requires each hole to have a circular raised base, formed at a twelve degree angle with the enclosure. In other words, before punching a hole in the metal sheet, the sheet must have a circular deformation that forms a twelve-degree angle with the rest of the metal sheet. Offsetting the high voltage bushing at twelve degrees permits easier installation and allows the high voltage bushing to use less space in the entire pad-mounted transformer enclosure.

A process called embossing is used to make the circular, raised deformation. Embossing is a process by which metal is lifted and deformed. Either before or after the metal sheet is embossed, a hole is punched such that the embossed portion forms a circular base around the punched hole. FIGS. **1**A and **1**B show one example of a prior art embossing and hole punching process **100**. In FIG. **1**A, an embossing machine **101** embosses a metal sheet **104** by deforming **105** one side of metal sheet **104** with an embossing punch **103**, without causing, a hole. In order to meet the requirements for a high voltage bushing (not shown), embossing punch **103** has an angled punch head **107** at an angle α. Angled punch head **107** creates an angle β in metal sheet **104**. In accordance with industry standards for high voltage bushings, angles α and β commonly are set at twelve degrees.

An operator then removes embossed metal sheet **104** from embossing machine **101** and places it in a hole-punching machine **110**. As shown in FIG. **1**B, hole-punching machine **110** has a hole punch **102** with a flat punch head **108**. Hole punch **102** also has a radius r**2** that is less than a radius r**1** of embossing punch **103**. The smaller radius r**2** forms a hole **106** with an embossed base raised at an angle of twelve degrees, as required in the transformer industry.

In order to punch a sufficiently round hole, the operator must rotate metal sheet **104** twelve degrees in a counter-clockwise direction. The twelve-degree rotation permits hole-punching machine **110** to make a sufficiently circular hole to meet the strict industry standards. In addition, in order to ensure that a precision hole is formed, embossed portion **105** must be placed directly under hole punch **102**. Thus, in order to keep the radius of punched hole **106** within the specified tolerance, the machine operator must carefully align hole punch **102** over deformation **105** made by the embossing punch **103**. The further hole punch **102** is out of alignment with the deformation **105**, the more out of tolerance hole **106** will be. However, visually aligning deformation **105** with hole punch **102** is a difficult and imprecise process. Moreover, once the operator aligns hole punch **102**, metal sheet **104** may move while the operator is securing it to hole punch machine **110**. Accordingly, it often takes many attempts and many unusable metal sheets to create a hole within the strict tolerance required for transformer enclosures. Although there are laser-cutting devices that can create holes within the required tolerance, these devices are far more complex and more costly.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to provide a system and method that would remove the need for human intervention and eliminate the error inherent in aligning an embossed metal sheet with a hole punch. In addition, by removing human intervention, the embossing and punching process may be automated using robots. However, current robotic technology is incapable of rotating metal sheet **104** twelve degrees in a counterclockwise direction as required in prior art process **100**. Automating this process may also contribute to the robotic automation of an entire manufacturing or assembly line process.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method and system that creates a hole with an embossed base in a planar sheet. The system comprises an embossing punch that forms a raised area in the planar sheet, a hole punch coupled to the embossing punch that forms a hole in the planar sheet, and a surface for holding the planar sheet. The surface has an aperture that permits the hole punch and the embossing punch to pass through the surface and contact the planar sheet.

In one embodiment, the embossing punch and the hole punch have angled heads whose angles are approximately equal, so that a hole formed in the raised area is circular. Other aspects of the present invention are disclosed below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. **1**A and **1**B show a prior art embossing and hole punching process; and

FIGS. **2**A and **2**B show an embossing and hole punching process, according to the present invention.

Reference will now be made in detail to a presently preferred embodiment of the invention, an example of which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention provides a single device that automatically embosses and punches a hole in a metal sheet without the need for human intervention, and thus is capable of producing holes within the strict tolerances required by transformer enclosures, for example. The present invention also provides a cost advantage by having one machine perform a function that in the past required two machines.

FIGS. **2**A and **2**B show two phases of a single machine **201** that first embosses a metal sheet **204** and then punches a hole **206** into the embossed portion **205**. FIGS. **2**A and **2**B show a side view of metal sheet **204**. Metal sheet **204**, which may be made of mild or stainless steel, is placed in machine **201**. Metal sheet **204** may be placed in machine **201** by robotic techniques, for example. Machine **201** has special grip pads (not shown) to control the movement of metal sheet **204** in order to minimize distortion, tearing and thinning of the steel during the process.

As shown in FIG. **2**A, embossing punch **203** first moves upward, creating a deformation **205** in metal sheet **204**. Because embossing punch **203** has an embossing head **207** with an angle α, deformation **205** creates an angle β with the undeformed portion of metal sheet **204**, where angle β equals angle α. Where the resultant hole is for a high voltage bushing on a transformer enclosure, angles α and β preferably will be about twelve degrees. Embossing punch **203** and hole punch **202** are synchronized so that as embossing punch **203** travels up and toward metal sheet **204**, hole punch **202** travels upward and away from metal sheet **204**. As shown in FIG. **2**B, after embossing punch **203** has created deformation **205** in metal sheet **204**, hole punch **202** travels down and toward metal sheet **204**.

As with embossing punch **203**, hole punch **202** has a punching head **208** with an angle δ. It is preferred that angle δ is equal to angles α and β. More preferably, angles δ, α and β are twelve degrees. By making angle δ equal to angles α and β, resultant hole **206** is circular, thus keeping hole **206** within the strict tolerances required for transformer enclosures, for example. After hole punch **202** creates hole **206** in metal sheet **204**, hole punch moves upward and away from metal sheet **204**, until neither hole punch **202** nor embossing punch **203** are engaging metal sheet **204**. Metal sheet **204** is then removed from machine **201** for further processing, allowing another sheet (not shown) to enter machine **201** and undergo the embossing and punching process, similar to metal sheet **204**. Metal sheet **204** may be removed from machine **201** by robotic techniques, for example.

The present invention is directed to parts and apparatuses used in the automated fabrication of large metal enclosures, that include, but are not limited to, electrical transformer tank enclosures, regardless of any specific description in the drawing or examples set forth herein. It will be understood that the present invention is not limited to use of any of the particular parts or assemblies discussed herein. Indeed, this invention can be used in any assembly or manufacturing line that requires automated embossing and hole punching. Further, the apparatus disclosed in the present invention can be used with the method of the present invention or a variety of other applications.

While the present invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the presently preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the invention is not limited to the embodiments specifically disclosed herein. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various changes and adaptations of the present invention may be made in the form and details of these embodiments without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

I claim:

1. A system that creates a hole with an embossed base in a planar sheet, comprising:

a hole punch;

an embossing punch coupled to said hole punch, wherein said embossing punch forms a raised area with an angled portion at an angle to said planar sheet, and wherein said hole punch forms a hole in said angled portion of said raised area; and

a surface for holding said planar sheet, wherein said surface has an aperture that permits said hole punch and said embossing punch to pass through said surface and contact said planar sheet.

2. The system of claim **1**, wherein said embossing punch has an angled head, and wherein said hole punch has an angled head.

3. The system of claim **2**, wherein said angled head of said embossing punch and said angled head of said hole punch are approximately equal.

4. The system of claim **1**, wherein said raised area and said hole are circular.

5. The system of claim **1**, wherein said hole punch and said embossing punch move in a vertical plane relative to each other.

6. The system of claim **1**, wherein said planar sheet includes a metal substance.

7. A method for creating a hole with an embossed base in a planar sheet, comprising the steps of:

holding said planar sheet in a fixed position;

forming a raised area with an angled portion in said planar sheet; and

creating a hole in said planar sheet, wherein said hole is formed in said angled portion of said raised area.

8. The method of claim **7**, wherein said raised area and said hole are circular.

9. The method of claim **7**, wherein said planar sheet includes a metal substance.

10. The method of claim **7**, wherein said forming said raised area and said creating said hole are done in synchronization.

11. The method of claim **10**, wherein said synchronization is accomplished electrically.

12. A system that creates a hole with an embossed base in a planar sheet, comprising an embossing punch with an angled head that forms a raised area with an angled portion at an angle to said planar sheet, a hole punch with an angled head that forms a hole in said angled portion of said raised area, wherein said embossing punch and said hole punch move in a vertical plane relative to each other, said system further comprising a surface for holding said planar sheet, wherein said surface has an aperture that permits said hole punch and said embossing punch to pass through said surface and contact said planar sheet.

13. The system of claim **12**, wherein said angled head of said said embossing punch and said angled head of said hole punch are approxiamtely equal.

14. The system of claim **12**, wherein said planar sheet includes a metal substance.

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 6,311,535 B1
DATED : November 6, 2001
INVENTOR(S) : Tarak Mehta

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 4,
Lines 35-39 should read as follows:

-- holding said planar sheet in a fixed position;
forming a raised area with an angled portion **at an angle to** said planar sheet **while being held in said fixed position;** and
creating a hole in said planar sheet, wherein said hole is formed in said angled portion of said raised area **while being held in said fixed position**. --

Signed and Sealed this

Second Day of July, 2002

Attest:

JAMES E. ROGAN
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Attesting Officer